

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM

*Bulletin*

OF THE

ART DIVISION

Vol. 6 No. 1

*Winter, 1954*



*Front Cover—*

Detail, from "Holy Family with the Dove," circa 1609-10  
PETER PAUL RUBENS (1577-1640)  
*The Denis Fund*

## HOLY FAMILY WITH THE DOVE BY RUBENS

Rubens was thus far represented in Los Angeles County Museum with an impressive study head of a bearded man, formerly in the Duke of Oldenburg Collection, a gift of Miss Mabury, and a sketch of *Samson and the Lion* from the artist's late Madrid period, purchased through the Hearst Foundation. With the acquisition of the *Holy Family with the Dove*<sup>1</sup> the Museum has come into possession of one of his important altar-pieces, which shows the master at the period when, after the deep impressions he had received in Italy, he started on his independent way in his home country. Rubens arrived in Antwerp in October 1608, his return occasioned by the death of his mother. The next great landmarks in his development were the *Adoration of the Kings* ordered from the now famous artist by the city of Antwerp (1609-10) and the *Elevation of the Cross* painted for Antwerp Cathedral (1610). Our painting must have been executed in between, while he was still filled with memories from Italy, as is shown not the least in its bright colors and the brown Caravaggiesque shadows. But if we compare it with the models Rubens may have used for the linear composition, we find that the master (who was now in the beginning of his thirties) had found his own style, even in so traditional a motif as the Holy Family.

Dr. L. Burchard, who first published the painting<sup>2</sup> after it was re-discovered in a Silesian castle (Count Kospoth, in Briese near Öls), remarked rightly: "Among the old masters who were especially fond of treating the subject of the Holy Family, the greatest were Raffael and Rubens: in none of his paintings Rubens vied so successfully with his famous predecessor's late Roman works, combining strength with grace, as in the present painting."

The painting by Raffael which Rubens may have had in mind when he composed the *Holy Family with the Dove* is probably a large Holy

Family now in the Louvre (painted for Francis I, 1518) which he must have known, if not in the original, then through an engraving. In this composition the most striking motif is the Christ child jumping out from His cradle and holding both arms toward His mother whom He wants to embrace. In Rubens' painting it is the little S. John who with a similar gesture, extending both arms and also with one foot still in the cradle, rushes forward, not toward the Virgin, but to the Christ child who stands on her lap, holding the Dove in His hands. His playfellow tries to grasp the struggling bird, managing to get hold of its tail, from which some feathers fall through the air.

This main motif shows how the religious conceptions had changed during the one-hundred years since Raffael's time. Raffael is not considered one of the most religious painters of the Renaissance, yet his Holy Family has (compared to Rubens') still an almost mediaeval hieratic style. It can be recognized, at once, as an altar-piece destined to impress the devotees with the spectacle of a miraculous event—if by nothing else than by the haloes of the figures, by the adoring attitude of the little S. John who kneels before the Christ child with a cross in his arms, and by the Angel appearing from the background who throws flowers over the Virgin and the Child. The figures in spite of the liveliness of their movements, which must have impressed Rubens, show a restrained attitude and a seriousness of expression; they are living in a cold and silent atmosphere, as befits the supernatural character of the scene.

Rubens' performance, on the other hand, appears very worldly. We know that the artist was a fervent Catholic, but he followed the tendency of the Roman church of the Baroque age, in bringing even the most holy subject down to the understanding of the masses, stressing in the Christian stories their intensely human and earthly side.

Rubens' *Holy Family* has become a genre scene—in this point he stands nearer to Rem-

<sup>1</sup>A. 1078.53-334, oil on panel, 55½x47½ inches.

<sup>2</sup>In *Unknown Masterpieces*, ed. by W. R. Valentiner (1930), No. 41.

brandt, who belonged to the same age, than to Raffael. If it were not for the traditional group of five figures forming the Holy Family, that is, the two old ones, two children, and the woman of middle age, and were it not for the conventional color scheme—the red and blue of the Virgin's robes, brown and greenish robes of S. Elizabeth and Joseph—we would hardly suspect that we are witnessing the holiest scene of Christian faith. The figures have no haloes, there is no cross, nor an angel in the picture. The way the children are treating the Dove, which after all is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, would have been blasphemous to an earlier age.

This nearness to the world of that day brings the composition also nearer to the popular understanding of our own time. To whatever creed the spectator may subscribe, he can enjoy the pleasing and entertaining content of the painting, the beautiful forms of the tall and noble Mother, the excited play of the two charming children with their blond flowing hair, the intense pleasure the two old people get out of this play, with S. Elizabeth pointing to the little John as if she were saying to the Christ child: Look, how the dear little boy is attached to you!

Over the great freedom with which Rubens has treated the subject, we forget that in the formal linear arrangement he shows still the connection with the High Renaissance. The forms are monumental and grand, in the massive figures of the adults as well as in the children with their herculean bodies; the contraposto of the Italian masters is observed in the postures of the two children, both of them placing the left foot backward, the right forward, the one foot straight, corresponding to the other bent. While the Christ child is seen

half from the front, the S. John in a supplementing movement is seen half from behind. The composition is built up in a high triangle, but in accordance with the Baroque system the diagonal is stressed, the stream of excitement surging up from the lower left to the upper right. The outlines of the group do not fit into a circle as often with Raffael, but in an oval of which the top point is out of the center because the Baroque masters, differing from Renaissance painters, prefer asymmetry.

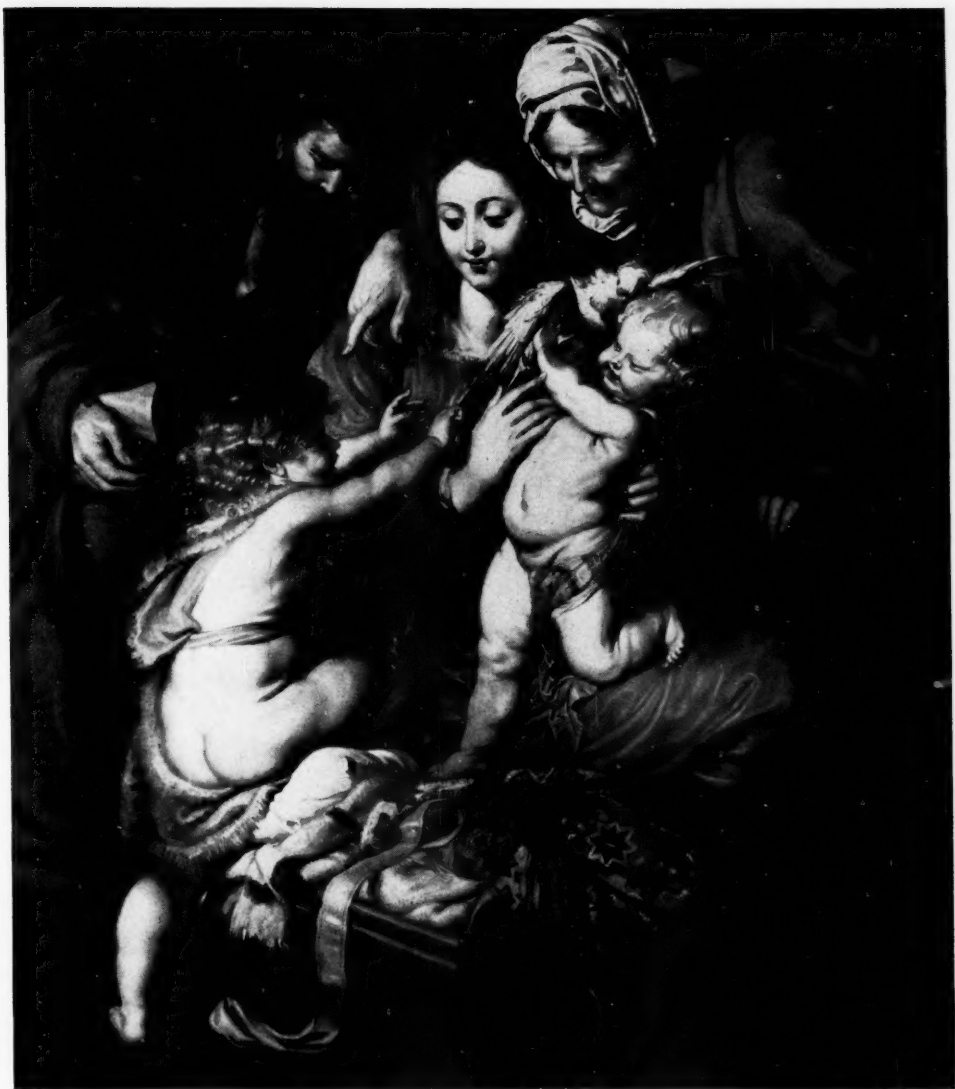
These hidden formulae we do not notice, because the great master's spirit flows bouyantly and exuberantly through every section of the composition, enlivening it with the temperament and the momentaneous expression in which Rubens is unsurpassed.

How carefully the artist worked out the composition in every detail is proved by the fact that he painted a small *Modello* for it, which with few changes shows the complete composition in every essential detail. This sketch, formerly in Lord Dartmouth's collection, belongs now to Mrs. William H. Moore in New York. There has been some question whether the painting should be dated at the end of the Italian or the beginning of the second Antwerp period. We know that the artist was overcrowded with work in 1608 before he left Italy; besides, what is more important, our painting is nearest in style to two paintings which were executed in 1609 or 1610<sup>3</sup>—that is, the large *Adoration of the Kings* which we mentioned before, now in the Prado, and *Samson and Delilah* in the Neuerburg Collection in Hamburg. Both these paintings have in common with ours the strong plasticity of the figures, which are clearly cut out against a dark background in the Caravaggio manner, the same isolated local colors of the costumes, and details like the wavy blond hair of some of the figures or especially the use of an oriental rug in the foreground of all three paintings.<sup>4</sup>

Our painting was engraved in Rubens' time, edited by Martinus van den Enden (reproduced in M. Rooses Vol. I, pl. 79), and must have been well known in the seventeenth century, as copies exist in Italy and Spain. After it had

<sup>3</sup>Also, the fact that the *Holy Family with the Dove* as well as the *Modello* are painted on an oak panel, speaks for their being painted in the Netherlands.

<sup>4</sup>That *Samson and Delilah* was painted at about the same time as the Madrid *Adoration of the Kings* has been proved recently by the discovery through X-rays of the sketch for the latter painting, upon the panel (now in the Chicago Art Institute) on which a sketch for the *Samson and Delilah* composition was painted later by Rubens. See: *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 1953.



been sold by Count Kospoth, it came into the possession of Gustav Nebehey (Berlin) in 1930, and was later acquired by Gustav Oberlaender of Reading, Pa. from whose sale it came into the hands of Dr. Frederic Mont, New York. From him it was acquired by Dr. Charles F. Sanborn, Los Angeles. After Dr. Sanborn's death it was purchased from his estate through

the Alberta Johnston Denis bequest fund, by Los Angeles County Museum. The painting was exhibited in the Rubens exhibition at Detroit (1936, Catalogue No. 1) and again at Los Angeles (1946, Catalogue No. 9) and is reproduced in *Rubens Paintings in America* by J. A. Goris and J. S. Held (1947) No. 45.

—W. R. VALENTINER



## A ROMAN CINERARY URN

The Museum has been most fortunate in the gift of a large Roman glass cinerary urn<sup>1</sup> dating from the 1st Century B.C.—1st Century A.D.

An amphora of light aquamarine blown glass, with rounded lip and short flaring foot, it carries two M-shaped handles and has a flat-domed cover upswept to a button knob. The richly discolored surface shows considerable incrustation.

<sup>1</sup>A. 6366.53-1, height 17¼ inches. The gift of Mr. Harry Masser, Los Angeles.

This is a fine example of the cinerary ash urn, similar types of which exist in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Another such urn, but of smaller size, may be found in the Portland Museum. Our own was discovered near Paestum in 1870.

With the gradual prevalence of inhumation in the Roman Empire, the use of such urns was superseded by burial in sarcophagi, although Kisa describes them as continuing actually as late as the time of the Antonines.

—EBRIA FEINBLATT

## A RARE BRONZE IMAGE OF SURYA

Within recent months, the Museum has added a number of important examples of Far Eastern Art to its collections. Foremost among these is a rare bronze image from Kashmir, representing Surya, the Sun-god of Hindu mythology.<sup>1</sup> Kashmir, today a small independent state, located at a height of 6,000 feet in the foothills of the Punjab Himalayas, maintained in ancient times an intimate relationship with India. The dominions of King Asoka (274-236 B.C.), the great patron of Buddhism, and those of King Kanishka (ca. A.D. 129-160) the famous ruler of the Kushan dynasty, included the Kashmir Valley, but by the seventh century Kashmir was apparently an independent kingdom.

Through these contacts with India, Buddhism and Buddhist art dominated the early phases of religious art in Kashmir. By the ninth century, however, Hinduism had largely replaced Buddhism, corresponding to the great Hindu revival which took place in India, following the fall of the Gupta dynasty. The Museum's newly acquired bronze image of Surya may be assigned to the tenth century, the period when Hinduism dominated the art of Kashmir.

Our figure of Surya is represented in symmetrical, frontal view, standing erect and holding a full-blown lotus in each hand. A distinction may be made between two very characteristic types of Surya image, a Northern and a Southern type.<sup>2</sup> In the former, the hands are normally at the natural level of the hips or elbows and each hand holds a full-blown lotus flower which rises to the height of the shoulders. This is in contrast to the Southern image where the hands are raised much higher, and the lotus flowers are only half blossomed.<sup>3</sup> The full-blown lotus flowers and the position of the hands would thus seem to confirm the Northern origin of our figure.

The deity is naked to the waist except for a broad piece of cloth covering the front of the upper body. A scarf, draped over the shoulders, falls over the arms in sweeping, flowing lines which parallel the sinuous, elegant contours of the torso. The lower body is clad in a *dhoti* which covers the thighs and legs. A narrow belt encircles the waist and from it are suspended long chains with large heart-shaped jewels. The deity wears a high jewelled crown (*kiritamukuta*) with flat top, large earrings and necklace, armlets and bracelets, and long garland which forms a large pendant loop just below the knees.

Sun-god Surya—Kashmir, 10th Century  
Museum Associates, Balch Fund



<sup>1</sup>L. 2100.53-457, height 11 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Museum Associates, Balch Fund.

<sup>2</sup>T.A.G. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, 2 vols., Madras, 1914-16.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 311.



The halo is in the form of a large full-blown lotus surrounded by a narrow border studded with jewels. The 'third eye' on the forehead and the center of the large lotus held in each hand are inlaid with silver.

The bronze Surya reflects the stylistic characteristics of Medieval Indian sculpture and may be compared with similar, though larger, images of stone from Northern India, for example a Surya stele from Chapra, now in the Rājshāhi Museum, carved in the black slate of the Pala

<sup>4</sup>A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, London, New York, and Leipzig, 1927, pl. LXXI, fig. 227.

school.<sup>4</sup> The stele (which dates from the eleventh century) is in a richer and more elaborate style which represents the Sun-god in the company of attendant deities, riding the sun-chariot drawn by seven horses and steered by the driver Aruna. The style of the Sun-god, the principal figure of the relief, taken by itself is, however, not very far removed from the much simpler and more subdued style of the Museum's bronze image. The unusual beauty and charm of the bronze derive largely from the simple lines and flowing contours which mould the graceful, slender figure of the Sun-god.

—HENRY TRUBNER

## TWO CERAMICS OF THE SUNG DYNASTY



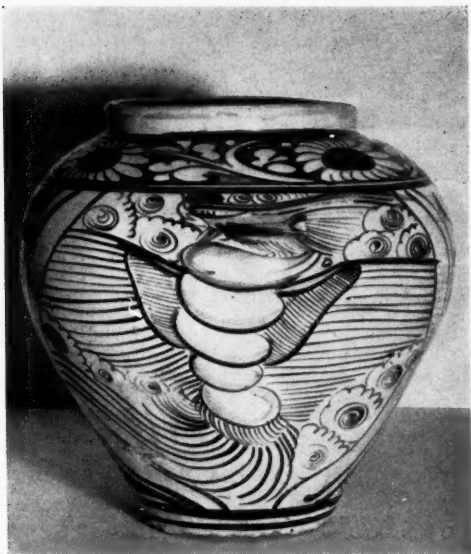
Six excellent examples of Chinese ceramic art, including a Yüeh ware ewer of the Six Dynasties period, several Sung pieces, and an early fifteenth century Blue-and-White bowl, have been presented to the Museum as an anonymous gift in memory of the late Ernest Larson Blanck. More recently, a beautiful and very important jar of Sung dynasty Tz'u-chou ware was donated by Mr. Jack G. Kuhrtz of Los Angeles. Lack of space prevents the publication of all these acquisitions in this brief article, which will be limited to two of the objects, a Lung-ch'üan celadon jar of the Sung dynasty, part of the first group of gifts, and the Tz'u-chou jar.

The celadon jar<sup>1</sup> has an ovoid body, a slender neck with slightly spreading lip, and low domed cover. A powerfully modeled dragon in full relief winds about the neck, while the figure of a reclining dog may be recognized on the cover. A band of petals molded in low relief rises above the foot, encircling the lower body.

<sup>1</sup>A. 6429.53-3, height 10 inches.

Covered jar, Lung-ch'üan celadon  
Given in memory of Ernest Larson Blanck





Our jar is an important example of Sung celadon from the Lung-ch'üan kilns in Chekiang province. It is of high-fired grey porcellaneous stoneware covered with a thick, glossy glaze of bright green, slightly bluish color. The exposed foot rim and mouth rim of the jar have turned red in the firing process, as a result of the high iron content of the clay. The red, unglazed foot of Lung-ch'üan celadon (commonly known as "iron-foot") is a characteristic feature of this ware.

The newly acquired stoneware jar of Tz'u-chou type<sup>2</sup> has an inverted pear-shaped body, with wide mouth and short straight neck. The powerful, swelling contour of the jar represents a common Sung shape, reflecting the strong sense of design displayed by the Sung potters.

The buff-grey stoneware body, typical of Tz'u-chou ware, was first covered with a cream-

Brown-painted jar, Tz'u-chou (and reverse)  
*Gift of Jack G. Kuhrtz*

colored slip, upon which the bold design, painted in two shades of brown, was subsequently rendered before the application of a transparent, neutral over-glaze. The ornament is built around two principal motifs, a large powerful dragon and a cleverly conceived phoenix, on opposite sides of the jar. Both the dragon and phoenix move amidst swiftly drawn cloud-scrolls, each in a large medallion and bordered by floral motifs. A narrow floral border encircles the shoulder.

The jar is an important example of Northern Sung stoneware and is remarkable for the unrestrained freedom and boldness of the brushwork. It represents one of

<sup>2</sup>A. 6462.53-1, height 12 inches, mouth 7 inches diameter.



many techniques practiced by the Tz'u-chou potters, in this instance, the frequently employed method of painting the design on a ground of cream-colored slip under a transparent, neutral overglaze. Tz'u-chou ware denotes a generic type, deriving its name from the most important center of manufacture in Southern Hopei.

<sup>3</sup>*Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, Oct. 1949.

but produced over a wide area of northern China and comprising a great variety of types and techniques. It is therefore of special interest to note that a very similar jar is owned by the Cleveland Museum<sup>3</sup>, so similar in fact that the two jars might quite possibly be the work of the same potter, or at least the product of the same kiln.

—HENRY TRUBNER

## NICHOLAS GEFFROY: LOST AND FOUND

Thanks to the Denis Fund, the Museum was enabled to acquire within recent months a group of fine 18th century examples of American furniture, representing regional types of work from Boston down to Baltimore. All these came from private sources, and mostly they were old friends, previously on loan to the Museum.

As to style, they were so different as Parson Caleb Cushing's maple chair "of new fashion'd turning, drest in Spanish leather wt nails" (Salisbury, Mass. *circa* 1700) or a richly inlaid Sheraton mahogany card-table (Baltimore, *circa* 1800). A lean Yankee version of the Chippendale style was seen in the side chair (East Windsor, Conn. *circa* 1780) made by Eliphelet Chapin for the governor Oliver Wolcott; while from another Connecticut maker came a handsome tall-case clock, (by Enos Doolittle of Hartford, the 1760s) supplied to Gen. Roger Newberry, who married in 1762.

Shortly later, the Museum received by gift from Anna H. Bing a delightful group of less sophisticated 18th century pieces, including a New England board settle in applewood and of rare curved form, or an 18-candle chandelier made of tin. The permanent collections of American work were thus greatly enhanced.

Among the least imposing yet most interesting examples was the small mahogany looking-glass pictured here,<sup>1</sup> a glass with a hidden surprise.

With its thin scrolled cresting and corner "ears," its pale line of inlaid holly on a flat veneered frame, this is the latest version (*circa*

1800) of a long line of crested mirrors that had been favorites for more than a century. The late Stuart frame in walnut with either marqueterie or oysterwood, with an arched crest showing pierced or inlaid work, had developed into the tall Queen Anne frame with plain scrolled crest, to be followed by early Georgian frames of richly carved mahogany, or all of gesso-gilt reliefwork.

What we now call the Chippendale frames, though they appeared two decades before and a generation after that cabinetmaker's time, were of fine mahogany perhaps with gilded details, or in American work often of walnut or even curly maple. The Museum shows excellent examples, in a large so-called Constitution mirror (Boston, *circa* 1760-75) topped with an eagle, its gilt carving in contrast to dark mahogany, or in a plainer mahogany frame (Newport, *circa* 1770-85) with only a gilt eagle planted upon its pierced flat crest.

Alongside the best of these, our small glass looks timid and commonplace, which merely as an example of "the framer's work" indeed it is. Its importance is only discovered by looking at the back, where pasted to the pine lining board is seen the printed label of its maker. Browned and dimly faded, this reads:

### LOOKING-GLASS MANUFACTORY.

LOOKING GLASSES, of the newest fashions, in gilt and mahogany frames, double and single pillar; gilt frames, pillar and plain; mahogany do. Old Glasses new framed and new silvered; gift Frames for painting, needle-work, and profiles, of all sizes, made at short notice, by

<sup>1</sup>Accession number A. 1078.53-333, height 25 inches, the glass just under 9 x 13 inches. From a fund bequeathed by Alberta Johnston Denis.



Here from 150 years ago is that boon so familiar to us nowadays, a manufacturer's guarantee—though to be sure, the customer must pay Mr. Geffroy an extra fee for his risk.

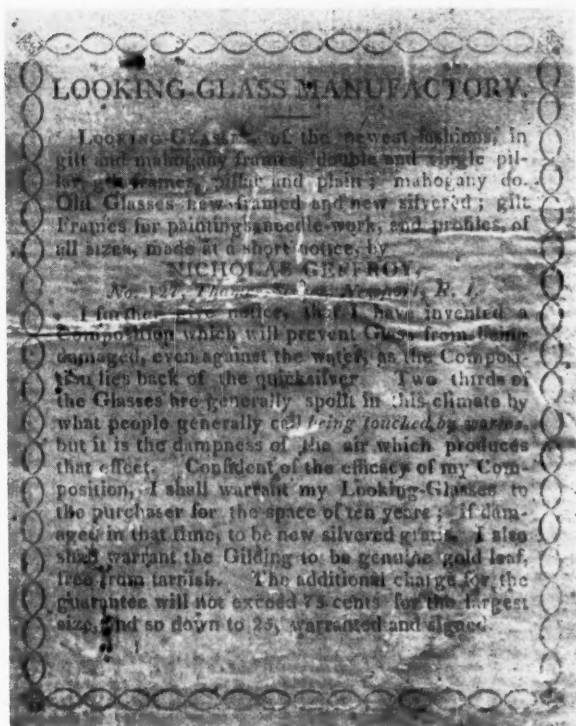
Presumably, his "invention" was nothing more wonderful than a protective coating of plaster-size, such as used quite commonly by other looking-glass makers. But a man had to think up *something* special, to attract trade. In 1763 another frame maker, John Elliott of Philadelphia, had made the wild promise he would "undertake to cure any English looking-glass that shews the face too long or too broad or any other way distorted."

We notice Gefroy's mention of frames for the popular "profiles," or silhouettes. And if not otherwise, we might guess the date of his label from its mention of "double and single pillar" gilt frames—meaning the tall glasses with slim colonnettes

## NICHOLAS GEFFROY

No. 127, Thames Street, Newport, R. I.

*I further give notice, that I have invented a Composition which will prevent Glass from being damaged, even against the water, as the Composition lies back of the quicksilver. Two thirds of the Glasses are generally spoilt in this climate by what people generally call being touched by worms, but it is the dampness of the air which produces that effect. Confident of the efficacy of my Composition, I shall warrant my Looking-Glasses to the purchaser for the space of ten years; if damaged in that time, to be new silvered gratis. I shall also warrant the Gilding to be genuine gold leaf, free from tarnish. The additional charge for the guarantee will not exceed 75 cents for the largest size, and so down to 25, warranted and signed.*



at the sides and an *eglotisé* panel above, a type found 1790-1820, now called "tabernacle" mirrors when the cornice carries a suspended row of acorns or spherules.

Very little American furniture is found with the maker's label,<sup>2</sup> a fact which places our glass in a favored category. Nor has any other instance of a Geffroy label been recorded.<sup>3</sup>

What we now know about early American craftsmen has come largely from piecing together scraps of information—in the finding of a maker's label, the preservation of old invoices, by a search of early correspondence and newspapers, of inventories or town records. For eminent figures such as Paul Revere in silverwork this might not be necessary; but the history of other "lost" men and the character of their work was revealed only piecemeal and painfully. It was so with Nicholas Geffroy, a shadowy and elusive figure, and it is interesting to see how our knowledge of him developed.

First he appeared as a silversmith, an *N. Geffroy* (whereabouts unknown) being listed in the Boston Museum *American Church Silver* catalogue of 1911. Hollis French's book for the Walpole Society (1917) gave him to Newport, and correctly showed his dates as 1761-1839. Louise Avery's first book (1920) showed his given name as Nicholas, and Ensko's (1927) gave the year 1782, apparently when Geffroy, having reached his majority, began work as a silversmith.

With this much established, our man could be found in *Les Combattments Francaise de la Guerre Americane, 1778-83* (1905) where six men named Geffroy, otherwise Geoffroy or Jeffroy, landed in 1778 amongst a boatload of compatriots arriving with General Lafayette. Our young Nicholas was one, the others being George, Jean, Jean-Baptiste, Jean-Marie, and Louis Geffroy. A certain Andrew Geffroy, of

unknown relationship to Nicholas, turned up in the Newport census of 1790, there being many such Huguenot emigres in this vicinity.

Of our man's work as a silversmith, the evidence was not impressive. A pretty little beaker showing an engraved urn monogrammed JSM brought \$260 in the Israel Sack Sale of 1927 at Anderson Galleries. With it was a leather fire-bucket lettered NICOLAS [sic] GEFFROY and bearing a metal plate inscribed: "Newport Independent Volunteers, 1806."

Other than this, one found a solitary porringer with "keyhole" handle (Clearwater Collection) or occasional spoons, ladles, sugar tongs, turning up from time to time. Their mark was GEFFROY, sometimes N. GEFFROY. From such a scanty showing, it seemed that Mr. Geffroy must be one of those small, part-time silversmiths so common in earlier days—men who were perhaps tavern keepers or merchants, producing in what hours they could spare a small amount of simple silverwork, wholly to order of the local market.

But our man was seen in a different light when Mable M. Swan (in *Antiques* for April 1946) published her research checklist of 68 Newport "joiners," as separate from chairmakers or carvers, including the name Nicholas Geffroy with the date 1800. Here was Geffroy's "other business" than a silversmith, to which the label on our mirror gives testimony.

It remains only for Herbert O. Brigham, librarian of the Newport Historical Society, to round out our picture of Mr. Geffroy in a letter he wrote (7th November 1942) to the former owner of our mirror. His remarks are so revealing they deserve to be quoted in full:

Dear Mr. B—

. . . It is quite possible that Nicholas Geffroy included the making of mirrors in the business at his store, as he was a clever and skillful artisan and the profession of silversmith in a small town, at that date, could not have been a very lucrative one.

The building in which he lived and carried on his profession has been entirely changed, but we do know the site of it. The street numbers have been changed several times. This site

<sup>2</sup>Labels are pictured in Edwin Hipkiss, *Eighteenth-Century American Arts* (the Karolik Collection); in Joseph Downs, *American Furniture* (the du Pont Collections at "Winterthur"); in Thomas H. Ormsbee, *Early American Furniture Makers*.

<sup>3</sup>It was our own glass that Nutting mentioned p. 430 of his *Furniture Treasury*, Vol. III (1933), or that was described pp. 184-187 of *The Magazine Antiques* for September 1948.

is on Thames Street east side, next to the corner of Cotton's Court on the north, now occupied by Herz Brothers as a tobacco store. Dr. Henry E. Turner, one of the founders of our Society, describes it in his *Reminiscences*:

"The estate next adjoining the Channing estate on the south was owned and occupied by Mr. Nicholas Geffroy, who carried on an extensive and very successful jewelry and goldsmith business there. He lived in the house until he met with business reverses, and my first definite recollection of it is the stock in trade being closed out under the direction of Mr. George

W. Cole, who had been his confidential clerk for a very long time. Mr. Geffroy never did any business after, and being then a very old man, he died not very long after.

"Mr. Geffroy was a quaint looking old Frenchman of many salient angles, and very full of waggery which was made very prominent and attractive by a French brogue or patois of great richness, and many of his queer expressions and peculiar actions were remembered and recounted by those of his contemporaries who had a relish and appreciation for traits of originality and humor."—GREGOR NORMAN-WILCOX

## PORTRAITS BY MODIGLIANI AND PICASSO

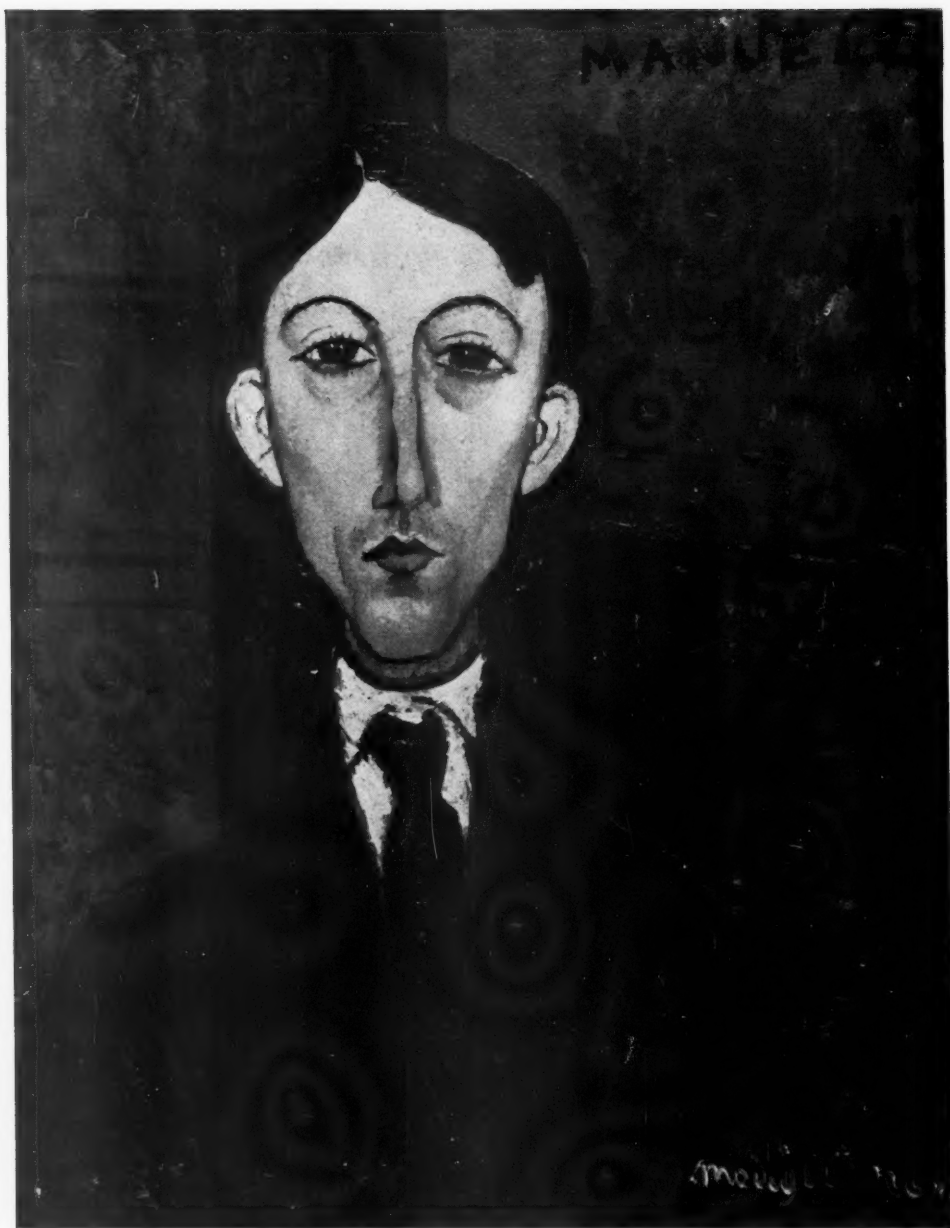
In recent years, the Museum has received an increasing number of outstanding works in the field of Modern Art. In addition to the larger gifts of whole collections, many individual items were presented, each of which helped fill important gaps, rounding out the entire collection.

One such recent gift representing a major accession is the *Portrait of Manuello* by Amadeo Modigliani (Italian, 1884-1920),<sup>1</sup> painted in 1916, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. William Wyler. Our painting (Fig. 1) is one of the many portraits painted by Modigliani which reflects the artist's undying interest in the life of the people who surrounded him. It is a study of a sensitive young man with large black eyes, sugar mug ears, pursing lips and pomaded hair, posing in the manner of an old-fashioned tintype, with a quiet assuredness and dignity recalling the early Catalan paintings which inspired it. Inscribed across the upper right hand section of the canvas is the name "Manuello" and while the subject was not further identified at the time of the gift, Dr. Paul Wescher suggested its resemblance to the *Portrait d'Homme* (Humbert) by Modigliani,<sup>2</sup> originally in the collection of Leopold Zborowski, the artist's dealer. Subsequent investigation proved this correct.<sup>3</sup> The Zborowski portrait (Fig. 2) appears to be somewhat later than ours. The sitter seems more mature and relaxed, the eyes are heavy lidded, almost fevered. The setting for both works is

in the same corner of the studio (strange how often Modigliani's subjects seem to be hemmed in a corner), and since Humbert is wearing the same clothes, it has been suggested that both works were painted at the same time, the Zborowski portrait, being the more "finished" work, showing the full torso and hands. However, the script signature and the spelling-out of the name "Manuello" on our canvas (a device used by Modigliani during 1915-17) differs from the printed signature in the larger canvas, such as appears in his later works.

*Portrait of Manuello* is the third work by this Italian artist in the Museum's collection. Two others were presented by William Preston Harrison in his gift of Modern French Art, one of the Museum's founding collections. The first is a delicate drawing in watercolor<sup>4</sup> and the second, an oil on cardboard, ca. 1914-15, a study of the artist Frank Burty Haviland (Fig. 3). This Harrison portrait is titled *Reverie* (*Portrait de M. Burty*)<sup>5</sup> and appears to be an earlier study for a "Portrait of Frank Burty Haviland" (ca. 1914) in the Gianni Mattioli collection in Milan.<sup>6</sup> Haviland, or Burty as he is sometimes called, was a painter, living in Cerèt, at the time our picture was executed.<sup>7</sup> Our portrait is painted on pressed cardboard, the paint applied in a somewhat "pointillist" manner, with the pencil-sketched construction lines showing through on the bare areas of the





*Above—*

Fig. 1—MODIGLIANI: *Portrait of Manuello*, c. 1916  
*Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William Wyler*

*Opposite—*

Fig. 2—MODIGLIANI: *Portrait d'Homme (le peintre Humbert)*, c. 1917  
*Ex-collection Zborowski, Paris*

board. The Mattioli portrait is more compact and direct in execution; there is less search and greater realization of objective, which suggests it was completed after ours. Recent reframing disclosed another painting on the reverse side of the Harrison portrait, a full length study of a man dressed in a smock, signed *M. Burty*,<sup>8</sup> which we believe to be an "exchange" portrait of Modigliani, by Burty (Fig. 4).

A thorough estimate of Modigliani's talent is still wanting, and it will probably result from the many retrospective exhibitions of recent years. Most writers lament Modigliani's early death, but all agree it is difficult to see where his talent would have led, had he continued to live. Like many of the painters of the School of Paris, Modigliani was not interested in pacing the diverse movements of his day. Stylistically his painting arrived late; in 1910 he was painting in the manner of the Italian *novocento* and the large body of his work during 1911-15 is more closely related to earlier Fauvism. The African mask quality of many of his portraits continued for fifteen years after the original "discovery" of the significance of those objects of primitive culture. The narrow range of Modigliani's subject interest, focusing on the human figure, suggests the comparison of a musical composer-performer, who has found a profound, creative expression, and in succeeding works, recreates around the original structure. Strangely enough, in a large exhibition of Modigliani's painting the spectator's attention is often drawn more to the personalities portrayed, the slice of Bohemian life, than to the creative merit of the work itself. One feels that he has entered into a room full of the artist's friends and acquaintances, each standing off from the other, whom the artist has somehow distilled through his preferences—there is no furniture, nor table arrangements, nor for that matter food and drink, the lonesomeness of the company is only relieved by an occasional nude on a couch.

Another portrait by a twentieth century master, recently acquired by the Museum is *Tête au Fond Chartreuse* by Pablo Picasso,<sup>9</sup> (Fig. 5), gift of Mr. William N. Copley. Dated "Julliet 25, 1941" on the back of the stretcher, the painting is a portrait of Dora Marr, one of the artist's most famous models prior to his recent marriage. Whether Mlle. Marr sat for the portrait is not known, but it resembles the many portraits the artist made of her during their ten year friendship. Our painting was done during the war in Paris after thirteen months of German occupation. The story of Picasso's determination to remain in Paris, despite offers of asylum elsewhere, is by now well known. Much of Picasso's production of that period has

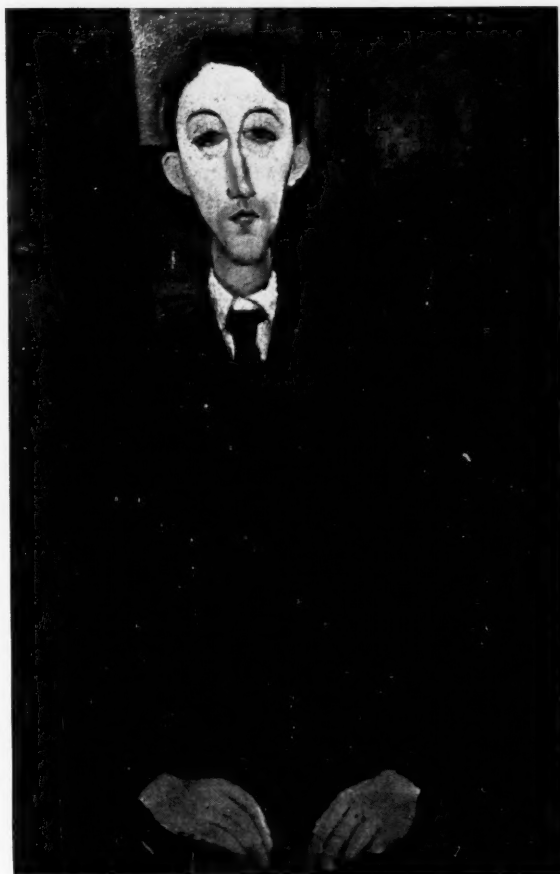






Fig. 3—MODIGLIANI: *Reverie (Portrait de M. Burty)*, c. 1914-15  
The Harrison Collection

been subjected to "interpretation" searching to find the master's concern with the war outside his window. It is true that his presence in Paris contributed greatly to the morale of the Resistance, and whether Picasso "expressed his indignation" in his paintings is still a matter of discussion. Our portrait can be said to touch only vaguely on this concern. It is a new study of the multiple view portrait. In a sense, our painting refers to Picasso's earliest cubist portraits, particularly the sculpted ones, in which the artist has taken the usual component of

features and rearranged or re-distributed them, in a more pictorial structure. In many respects it is closely related to the "double faced" portraits dating from 1936 with the beginning of his *Guernica* studies. These studies of faces which convey terror and anguish are constructed with elements of surrealism—the features, exaggerated, contorted, stretched to the ultimate of expression, combine to give us a new graphic experience with these emotions. In the succeeding ten years Picasso continued to paint "portrait" studies, exploring virtually every facet of solidity, simultaneity, and expressiveness.



Fig. 4—Signed *M. Burty* (Frank Burty Haviland). A portrait probably of Modigliani, painted on the reverse of Fig. 3

The color of our portrait, rich, strong and tactile, would suggest a more accurate connection with expressionism than to either cubism or surrealism. In our painting Picasso has flattened out the space, almost like a relief study, the left front view of the face is flat, with the right side sloping away to the ear in depth. The profile view of the eye and nose is advanced slightly to the front of the head and is set on the angle of the right side of the face. The hair drapes in a curve around the back of the head which is set upon a system of forms suggesting the profile view of a figure.

The hair is capped by a whimsical dash of millinery with bursting constellations for decoration. The whole appearance of the portrait suggests a rather sad, wan creature, if we judge from the front face and an intense expression of wonderment (or is it terror?) in the profile. The background is a bright, cool yellow, the profile of the face is a greyed-green white, and separated from the front face by a shadow of purple. The receding section of the front view is a deeper gray-green and the left section a lilac purple. The hair is a dark brown and is topped by a blue hat, the same blue color as



Fig. 5—PICASSO: *Tête au Fond Chartreuse*, dated 1941  
Gift of William N. Copley

the dress. The whole mass of the head stands out in bold relief against the background, with the monumentality of a Sphinx.

It is interesting to note that all of the paintings discussed here were made from living models, and in each case, a portrait of a friend of the artist. True, none provide a complete inventory of the subject's exact features, yet each has given us insight into the artist as well as his subject. One wonders if in these portraits, Modigliani and Picasso have not wilfully penetrated beyond the limits of likeness, to present a truer portrait of the irony of life,

wherein three "second string" painters have been assured a firm and lasting place in the realm of art as—models.

—JAMES B. BYRNES

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>A. 6112.51-1, oil on canvas, 26 x 20 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches, signed *Modigliani* (script) Lr.

Collections: William Wyler, Los Angeles  
James McHugh, Los Angeles  
Zeppo Marx, Los Angeles  
Georges Keller, Bignou Gallery, New York  
Libaude Collection, Paris

Reproduced: Roy J. Goldenberg Galleries, Beverly Hills,  
Sept. 10th 1948, catalogue #411

<sup>2</sup>"Portrait d'Homme (le peintre Humbert)" oil on canvas, ca. 1917.

Collections: Bignou Gallery, Paris  
A. Girard, Paris  
Leopold Zborowski, Paris

Reproduced: Arthur Pfannstiel, *Modigliani: L'Art et la vie*, Editions Seheur, Paris, 1929, Page 99 (as "Portrait de L'Ecrivain Humbert")

<sup>3</sup>Not much is known about the sitter, except that he was born Manuel Humbert, in Barcelona. He was president of a group of young Spanish painters in Paris, and one of his paintings (catalogue #15) was shown in an exhibition of "Living Spanish Artists," Los Angeles County Museum, May 1931.

<sup>4</sup>A. 809.29-60, watercolor 16½ x 10 inches, signed *Modigliani* l.l. Title: "Jeune Fille Assise," purchased in 1927 from Galerie Mme. Bulcher, Paris.

<sup>5</sup>A. 809.27-59, oil on cardboard, 24 x 19¾ inches. Purchased by Mr. Harrison in 1927 from same source as the above.

Published: Pfannstiel, *loc. cit.*, catalogue Page 7.

<sup>6</sup>Oil on canvas, 28¾ x 23¾ inches.

Reproduced: James Thrall Soby, *Modigliani*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1951 (catalogue #7 and shown Page 20); also in Pfannstiel, *loc. cit.*, catalogue Page 7 and shown Page 11.

<sup>7</sup>Kannweiler, *Juan Gris, His Life and Work*, Curt Valentin, New York, 1947. Kannweiler (p. 11) mentions Gris traveling to Ceret in October 1914, to meet Manolo and Haviland, who promised to find him housing and provide him with vegetables.

<sup>8</sup>"Figure of a Man" (*Modigliani?*), on reverse of Fig. 3.

<sup>9</sup>A. 6151.51-1, oil on canvas, 21¾ x 18¼ inches, signed *Picasso* l.l.

Collections: William N. Copley  
Stendahl Galleries, Hollywood  
Sam Kootz (purchased from the artist, 1947)

Reproduced: *Art Digest*, Feb. 1st, 1947, p. 16

*Harper's Bazaar*, April 1947, p. 184 (in color); and again in *Life*, March 1st, 1948, p. 67

## NOTES

### TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIFTS—

Gifts of works of art, and of art books, as well as cash donations to the Art Division of the Los Angeles County Museum, can be used for tax-deduction purposes.

### THE MUSEUM LIBRARY—

With the recent completion of the new Costume Hall and its facilities for costume research, the Museum Library will have multiplied requests for information. Books and back-issues of various journals would be most welcome, as relating to costumes of any period, any region. Such journals as (for example) "Harper's Bazaar" or the "Ladies' Home Journal" would furnish source material on nineteenth and early twentieth century costume.

Gifts of such material are of course approved for the federal income-tax deduction.

The Museum Librarian would be happy to discuss offers of material that might fill gaps in our collections, thereby extending our usefulness to students, researchers, and staff members.

(MRS. DOROTHY MARTIN — Richmond 2194)

Sec. 34.65 (e) P. L. & R.  
U. S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

Los Angeles, Calif.  
Permit No. 13945

# THE BULLETIN OF THE ART DIVISION

IS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM

EXPOSITION - LOS ANGELES 7 - CALIFORNIA

Jean Delacour  
*Director of the Museum*

Charles F. Gehring  
*Assistant Director*

Marvin C. Ross  
*Chief Curator of the Art Division*

William R. Valentiner  
*Consultant in Art*

James B. Byrnes<sup>\*</sup>  
*Curator of Modern Art*

Ebria Feinblatt  
*Curator of Prints and Drawings*

Gregor Norman-Wilcox  
*Curator of Decorative Arts  
and Editor of the "Bulletin"*

Henry Trubner  
*Curator of Oriental Art*

Frances Roberts Nugent  
*Instructor in Art*

<sup>\*</sup>Resigned, January 1954.

